

Delivery of speech Ministerial meeting on SEETO 1/12/2010

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Dear Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I have to apologise that Mrs Marjeta Jager, Director for General Policy, covering international affairs, in the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport is not able to be here today.

She is involved in a very important conciliation meeting in the European Parliament which prevents her to attend the present Ministerial Meeting.

However, she asked me to address you her best regards and proposed that I read a statement she prepared regarding the EU transport policy and cooperation with South East European countries.

Dear Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure that today's meeting will be a key date for strengthening the sound and efficient cooperation in the transport field in South East Europe that started in 2004.

In this context, I would like to thank SEETO and its members for the very intense work carried out in the past months to define the Multi-

annual Plan 2010 which represents an important step in view of an increased integration of the South East European network into the European one.

Efforts must be intensified in 2011 in view, for SEETO to be recognised as a crucial player both by the International Financial Institutions and the administrations of the seven participants to the Memorandum of Understanding.

Having said that, I also would like to seize this opportunity to inform you about the forthcoming important changes in the European Transport Policy that will affect indirectly – but certainly - South East Europe as well as our expectations of the future cooperation with the Region.

1 – White paper

The European Commission is currently engaged in preparing the successor to the 2001 White Paper.

The new White Paper will set out the Commissions' **long-term vision for the future of transport and mobility**, outlining how the sector can contribute to the wider strategy for a resource efficient Europe defined in the EU 2020 Communication.

One of the great challenges of tomorrow is to combine economic growth with more **moderate and smarter use of natural resources**.

Transport is a crucial sector in this respect: it uses one third of our energy demand, it relies almost exclusively on a **single energy source** – oil – and is also a large consumer of **another resource that is becoming scarce**, particularly in urban contexts: space.

Indeed, the following **trends in society** will seriously question the current transport paradigms:

- Increasing **scarcity of fossil fuels**, as world demand grows and extraction becomes more expensive. The 94% oil dependency makes the transport sector very vulnerable to oil shocks. The projected **growth of the emerging economies** and of the world population is bound to put additional pressure on natural resources
- **Environmental challenges**: emissions from transport witnessed in the EU a **33% increase over their 1990 levels**, more than in any other sector;
- **Congestion of infrastructure** due to growing demand for mobility: many cities are congested and some crucial infrastructures like ports and airports become saturated;
- **Problematic funding of transport**, since we have entered an era of budgetary consolidations and of increasing social security spending owing to the aging of society.

These challenges all require a similar response. We need to do three fundamental things:

- **Use less energy**
- **Use cleaner energy**
- **Exploit more efficiently the existing infrastructure**

2 – Revision of the TEN-T guidelines

Let me now turn on the TEN-T guidelines. The drafting of the new TEN-T Guidelines will bring a **fresh view** of the infrastructure picture. It is not only the network which will be updated but also the technical features/standards of this network, the smart infrastructure.

In other words, everything that both forms part of the network and facilitates its efficient functioning and instruments for TEN-T implementation will be changed.

The major innovation will be **the introduction of a prescriptive "core" network and the stronger integration of infrastructure in the transport policy.**

The new "core" network will come on the top of the "**comprehensive**" one which despite the possible confusion of names corresponds to the

"**core**" South East European network developed by SEETO. Therefore the next target that the 7 Participants to the MoU will have to face, will be the identification of the new "core" network according the EU definition.

In this context, one of the major challenges of the Guidelines' process will be to **reach a reasonable degree of coherence** between the network scope and instruments for implementation and to optimise the network in such a way as to take best possible account of climate change, environment constraints, traffic and cohesion needs.

Following this renewed policy target, it will be crucial to ensure that all projects included in the network – both already ongoing and newly planned – will be implemented according to the timetable.

To ensure this, it is proposed that the EU core network is prescriptive on Member States. Obviously, for non EU Member States we cannot impose the same rules but we can try to reach a similar level of discipline in particular in planning terms.

This will imply that additional efforts relating to the quality of the data collection and financial information is put on the next MAP exercise. That is the responsibility of each of you to carry out the necessary reforms and efforts to get reliable and realistic data.

Without being a revolution, the fact that we focus on a more limited number of priorities at European level, impose a better respect of the planning and of the coordination between the different players.

Providing a higher degree of certainty for potential public or private investors is certainly one of the key innovations of these renewed guidelines.

We should apply the same principles in the South East Europe Core Regional Transport network: our immediate target is to identify the priorities that can be financed either through public budgets or through the combination of different sources either public or private. In this context, the Western Balkan Investment Framework has an important role to play in the future.

Let me now turn on what are our expectations on the future cooperation between you and the European Union in the framework of a renewed transport policy.

Let's go beyond the current contingencies and think future: efficiency – certainty - quality, are the master words of a strengthened cooperation between the EU and the South East European countries.

The network of all your countries – sooner or later – will become an integral part of the TEN-T. It is therefore crucial for you to closely

follow the changes that are affecting it to be well prepared when it will be time to implement it.

But let me also tell you that we should have a 360° long term view on transport cooperation not only limited to transport infrastructure. The South East European countries are located at the cross-roads of many pan-European axes and the logistical issues will play in the future an increasing role.

Last but not least, in order to attract financial assistance to support projects in the area, I insist on the need to ensure high quality data collection and better follow up of the priority projects identified in the MAP. This is a common task but also a mutual interest.

I am convinced, dear Ministers, that today, this ministerial meeting can establish the foundation of a renewed cooperation between the EU and South East Europe in which our respective interests will be fully preserved and in which together we will have a stronger transport system to the benefit of all our citizens.

To conclude, let me take the opportunity to wish you a successful Ministerial meeting.

Marjeta Jager